

COMMERCE COMMITTEE – FEB. 25, 2009
Public Testimony by Michael Nickodem, DGA member

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, Members of the Commerce Committee, my name is Michael Nickodem. I am a film and television Location Manager and a member of the Directors Guild of America.

I have come today to address Senate Bill 176 and the Film Production Tax Credit.

I am a Location Manager with 22 years experience. I have worked for every major network and every major studio. I have managed three feature films in Connecticut including the Wes Craven thriller "25/8", the Barry Levinson comedy, "What Just Happened", and the first feature film to shoot in Connecticut under the Film Production Tax Credit Program, Vadim Perelman's suspense drama, "Life Before Her Eyes". I am currently preparing a film entitled "Prisoners", for Alcon Entertainment, to film in the Derby/Shelton area.

I can state with complete confidence that the three feature films I shot in Connecticut and the one I am now prepping would not have filmed in the state of Connecticut had there been a requirement to film fifty percent of the shooting schedule on a sound stage. In 22 years, I have never worked on a film that shot fifty percent of the shooting schedule on stage. It is my experience that most feature films rarely film more than ten percent of the shooting schedule on stage. The expense of building sets on a stage far exceeds the costs of shooting on location. Not even the benefits gained from a tax credit program would be enough to offset those added expenses and entice film productions to come to Connecticut. The result of passing such a requirement would invalidate the tax credit program and effectively end filming in the state.

Connecticut has a lot to offer the film industry. The state's diversity and beauty deserve to be represented on film. I urge the committee to follow the advice of film industry experts and vote no on requiring fifty percent filming on a sound stage as a requirement to qualify for the tax credit program.

It has been a pleasure to film in your state. I hope I may continue to do so.

Thank you for your time.